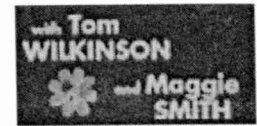


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July 7, 2011

36 Hours in Honolulu

By JOCELYN FUJII

HONOLULU has never been hotter, and not just because it's July. The city's "it" factor has been on the rise since President Obama announced, two years ago in Singapore, that his self-described "home state of Hawaii" would host the 2011 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum. This November, the 21-nation Pacific Rim summit may bring as many as 10,000 people to Waikiki, the renowned Honolulu destination on Oahu's south shore. While the city primps for the media glare, it also brims with summer's delights. Mangoes and sweet summer fruit add splashy colors to the market stands. Pikake, puakenikeni, gardenia and tuberose grace Chinatown lei stands, and Hawaiian music spills onto beaches from sunset-drenched oceanfront lounges.

Friday

4 p.m.

1) A SPA WITHOUT WALLS

There's nothing better than a summer moment at Kapiolani Park, the 300-acre recreational magnet at the foot of Diamond Head, the volcanic tuff cone and landmark the Hawaiians named Leahi. Work up a sweat with the joggers and rugby players while white terns soar above the ironwoods. Top that off with a sunset swim across the street, at the beach fronting the New Otani Kaimana Beach Hotel.

6 p.m.

2) HAWAIIAN TUNES

Sandy feet are not an anomaly at Duke's Restaurant and Barefoot Bar (2335 Kalakaua Avenue; 808-922-2268; dukeswaikiki.com), where the stars of Hawaiian music play nightly at sunset. Maunalua, a trio offering contemporary Hawaiian music, usually plays on Fridays, and the guitarist-vocalist Henry Kaponu, the self-proclaimed "wild Hawaiian," is the Hawaiian-rock attraction on Sundays. The open-air spot has a vintage surfer feel and wall-to-wall tributes to the Olympic swimming legend Duke Kahanamoku. Parking is expensive, but there's no cover charge.

7:30 p.m.

3) THE PALATE-PLEASER

Philippe Padovani, one of the 12 original founders of Hawaii Regional Cuisine, opened Padovani's Grill earlier this year, just in time for the 20th anniversary of the culinary movement. Fans love him for his designer chocolates, masterful sauces, signature clam chowder (Manila clams, sweet corn from Oahu's north shore and a soupçon of island seaweed) and risotto (truffle oil and several types of mushrooms). There are special touches across the board, including made-to-order sauces for the seafood and Black Angus beef dishes. The chef pays equal respect to vegetarians, with an excellent goat cheese ravioli and fricassee of mushrooms. For dessert, try the tarte Tatin and bourbon crème brûlée. A three-course dinner without drinks costs \$55 to \$65.

9:30 p.m.

4) FROM TATTOOS TO DRAGONS

The indie jazz scene is thriving at the top of a steep stairway in Chinatown, in a former tattoo parlor the size of a cozy living room. Some of the best musicians in town gather at the Dragon Upstairs (1038 Nuuanu Avenue; 808-526-1411; thedragonupstairs.com) to jam and entertain in grand bohemian style. Most nights it's the spectacular Japanese/local contemporary jazz pianist, Satomi Yarimizo, with her drummer and bass player. Because many in the audience are musicians, there are surprise performances galore in a seriously music-loving room.

Saturday

9 a.m.

5) DIAMOND HEAD FOOD FEST

Yes, it's possible to have breakfast on the slopes of Diamond Head, at Honolulu's busiest farmers' market. A bonanza for early-bird foodies, the Saturday farmers' market at Kapiolani Community College (4303 Diamond Head Road; 808-848-2074; hfbf.org) is the raison d'être for many a local food lover. Take your own bag and go early to find parking: it's worth it. Everything there is local. The rainbow of products is edible Hawaii in full color, whether it's persimmons, homemade ginger and guava drinks, mangoes, goat cheese, local honey or scones and banana bread.

11 a.m.

6) IT'S ALL ABOUT ART

With the merger this summer of the Contemporary Museum and the Honolulu Academy of

Arts (900 South Beretania Street; 808-532-8700; honoluluacademy.org), and a new director, Stephan Jost, the buzz is all about art. A \$25, two-and-a-half-hour tour of Shangri La, the Islamic museum founded by the Doris Duke estate, begins and ends at the Academy, which runs the Shangri La tours. A 20-minute shuttle ride takes you to the 1930s oceanfront mansion-turned-museum with its Iznik tiles, Central Asian textiles and 13th-century prayer room. When you return to the Academy, leave time for the Hawaii collection in the John Dominis and Patches Damon Holt Gallery, with works by Jules Tavernier, Lionel Walden and other Hawaiian masters.

1:30 p.m.

7) ART AND THE PLATE

The Pavilion Cafe (900 South Beretania Street; 808-532-8734; honoluluacademy.org/394-pavilion_cafe), the restaurant for the Academy of Arts, scores high points for its Mediterranean menu and its alfresco location next to a waterfall and Jun Kaneko sculptures. The menu, while not fancy, is ideal: white bean salad with arugula and wilted radicchio (\$12.95), hearty sandwiches (feta, tapenade, tomato; chopped salmon steak), a pasta of the day and desserts like chocolate pot de crème and fresh fruit crisp (\$5.95 each). At the Academy boutique a few steps away, books, cards, textiles and handmade jewelry make it one of Honolulu's stellar shopping attractions.

5:30 p.m.

8) SUNSET SERENADE

Halekulani's House Without a Key (2199 Kalia Road; 808-923-2311; halekulani.com) is a magnet at sunset. A century-old kiawe tree is gracefully backlit by the late afternoon sun, the mai tais (\$12) are heroic, and the views of the ocean and Diamond Head make you forget about the neighboring high-rises. When the hula dancer Kanoe Miller takes the stage, small talk ceases. It could be a postcard from the 1940s, the heyday of Waikiki. On Ms. Miller's nights off, Debbie Nakanelua fills the stage with her own brand of hula magic.

8 p.m.

9) THE RAW RAGE

Last year, Masaharu Morimoto, a star of the program "Iron Chef America," opened his first Hawaii restaurant, Morimoto Waikiki. Sharing a pool and lounge with the Waikiki Edition hotel, the sleek, high-concept restaurant offers yacht-filled harbor views, indoor-outdoor dining, a fire pit, a sushi bar and a bar. Outdoors, lanterns light poolside picnic tables where urbane networkers linger over designer cocktails and tapas. Coral sculptures and panels of green algae encased in acrylic are a bold interior statement by the designer Thomas Shoos.

Raw dishes, such as sashimi, toro tartare and the popular lamb and wagyu carpaccio, are classic Morimoto (\$13 to \$30), but the noodle dishes (\$10 to \$18), occasionally too salty and overcooked, are less successful. The wagyu steaks have a reverential following (\$50 to \$85), and the light-as-air tofu cheesecake (\$12) is a favorite.

Sunday

10 a.m.

10) THE TURNING POINT

The Makapuu Point Trail, at the easternmost part of the island, is the tour de force on a drive full of special moments. Pack sunscreen and a hat as you head south along Kalanianaʻole Highway past Hanauma Bay and Sandy Beach. Koko Head Crater on the left has created striated cliffs that nearly run into the lava shoreline, and you're driving between them both. Once past Sandy Beach, park at the Ka Iwi State Park lot and follow the trail to Makapuu Point along a two-mile 500-foot ascent. The 1909 Makapuu Lighthouse completes the package with views of the eastern coast and small offshore islands.

12:30 p.m.

11) THE BUZZ ABOUT BURGERS

Continue the drive along the windward coast, where sea turtles feed among fishermen and snorkelers. About 20 minutes from Makapuu, you'll reach Kailua Beach, lined with ironwoods and dotted with paddlers and windsurfers. The local watering hole, Buzz's Original Steakhouse (413 Kawailoa Road; 808-261-4661; buzzssteakhouse.com), is across the street with a charming veranda, and a tree growing through the center of the dining room. While it's basically a burger joint, there are some standouts, including the kiawe-grilled fresh fish burgers (\$11.95). Bloody Marys and beer flow freely from the koa and bamboo bar.

IF YOU GO

The year-old, style-centric **Waikiki Edition** (1775 Ala Moana Boulevard; 808-943-5800; editionhotels.com) has 353 rooms on 17 floors; rates range from \$379 to \$995. At the Diamond Head end of Waikiki, the **New Otani Kaimana Beach Hotel** (2863 Kalakaua Avenue; 808-923-1555; kaimana.com) has a sleeker look with its refurbished interiors. Rooms start at \$150.

Outrigger Reef on the Beach (2169 Kalia Road; 808-926-1959; outriggerreef-onthebeach.com) is on Waikiki Beach, with online summer rates from \$179 to \$369.

Specials and promotions are ongoing, so be sure to ask. Nightly Hawaiian music at the Kani Ka Pila Grille is a find for any music lover.